

What is the Citizens Advisory Committee on Pipeline Safety?

The citizen's committee was created by state law in 2000 to "advise the state agencies and other appropriate federal and local government agencies and officials on matters relating to hazardous liquid and gas pipeline safety, routing, construction, operation and maintenance." (RCW 81.88.140).

In 2002, Congress referenced the importance of such state advisory committees by requiring that the federal Secretary of Transportation respond in writing within 90 days to any pipeline safety recommendations made by a state pipeline safety advisory committee. (HR 3609, Section 24).

The committee has nine voting members representing the public, including local government and elected officials. Four non-voting members represent owners and operators of hazardous liquid and gas pipelines. The members are appointed by the Governor and serve three-year staggered terms. The director of the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) pipeline safety program and members of staff assist the committee.

Goals & Activities

The committee's primary goal is to maintain and improve the safety of pipelines in Washington State. In pursuing this goal, the committee expects to:

- Raise understanding and awareness of pipelines and pipeline safety;
- Review, comment and make recommendations on proposed local, state and federal pipeline laws and regulations;
- Give counsel and advice to local governments, the state pipeline safety program with the UTC, the state spill prevention and response program with Department of Ecology (DOE), and the federal pipeline safety program in the U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT), Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA).

In 2012, the committee met four times in Olympia. Presentations and discussions included:

- Lowthian Letter: Review of a letter forwarded from the Governor's office. Review was conducted by the UTC on the merits of the complaint. UTC found no indication of violation by the Local Distribution Company (LDC), Puget Sound Energy (PSE). UTC staff investigation found that the resident did not use the appropriate tool for excavating around the residential gas service. The committee discussed the necessity for safe digging practices and line locate requests prior to digging in conformance with the RCW 19.122.
- A PHMSA advanced notice of proposed rulemaking (ANPRM) was distributed to committee members. Follow-up discussion by the committee resulted in comments being formulated in anticipation of rulemaking. Those comments will be reviewed when the final notice is announced. At that time the comments will be submitted by the Committee on the proposed ANPRM.

2012 Stakeholder Report

- Update on 2011 Operator Inspection Process covered by UTC staff. This included a review of the UTC Penalty Policy.
- Reviewed a survey conducted by the PST (Pipeline Safety Trust) on the transparency of pipeline safety programs throughout the country. The survey covered all natural gas operators as a measure effectiveness safety programs and inspections. Washington State Programs were rated at the top of each category with the highest possible score.
- Tariff Update by the UTC on a PSE rate filing involving inclusion of added costs for newly instituted integrity management programs. The committee approved the drafting of a letter to the UTC Commissioners urging them to find a consensus approach with PSE and encourage the accelerated replacement of aging pipeline facilities by PSE.
- UTC will be updating the damage reporting requirements for both gas and liquid pipelines in accordance with the new damage prevention law RCW 19.122, which will require more timely and comprehensive reporting of damages by pipeline operators.
- Pipe Speak 101 - a review of pipeline code terminology for the non-pipeline affiliated members of the committee was presented. UTC staff also presented an overview of Washington rules in place over-and-above the federal requirements for operators.
- Incident updates by the UTC. They reported on a Puget Sound area house explosion that occurred on September 26, 2011. Staff gave a preliminary summary of facts but indicated the investigation was still in process and no findings had been issued at that time. A detailed report was made by committee member Rick Kuprewicz on the San Bruno Incident Report issued by the NTSB. The purpose of this report was to determine how the NTSB recommendations were applicable to operators in the State of Washington.
- Updates were made at each meeting by Department of Ecology staff on their monitoring of pipeline operators. Their efforts focused mostly on liquid pipeline operators in the areas of permitting, spill prevention, and training for spill response for hazardous liquid pipeline operators.
- High Consequence Area was a discussion topic as to the extent of public involvement in determining “High Consequence Areas” and accessibility by the public information on the areas and inspection requirements. By definition, these areas are defined by class locations for transmission pipelines.
- New Pipeline integrity inspections rules as required for compliance by PHMSA were discussed. A presentation of internal pipeline inspection as in “smart pigging” equipment was presented.
- The work plan for the coming year was reviewed and new items added per committee member requests.
- Control Room Operations rules were reported on by the operators of Distribution, Transmission of natural gas pipelines, and by operators of liquid products pipelines. New rules concerning their operations as instituted by PHMSA were discussed to understand how the changes affected their operations and increased safe operations at the control room level.

2012 Stakeholder Report

Members

In 2012, the committee lost and gained members as terms expired and new members were appointed.

As of December 31, 2012, members were:

Voting members:

David Taylor, chair, Ridgefield	Cities Representative
Tim Sweeney, vice-chair, Olympia	Public
Carl Weimer, Bellingham	Washington State Association of Counties
Bill Rickard, Spokane	Public
Arthur Coulombe, Walla Walla	Public
Ron Schmitt, Tacoma	Public
Andrew Martonick, Walla Walla	Public
Bob Beaumier, Spokane	Public
Terrill Briere, Renton	Public
Christian Amend, Pasco	Public

Non-voting members:

Ruth Mabrey, Battle Ground	Northwest Pipeline Corporation (WGP)
Rosalie Ann Lopez, Seattle	BP/Olympic Pipe Line
Cory Herrick, Tacoma	McChord Pipeline
Jody Morehouse, Spokane	Avista Utilities

Citizens Advisory Committee on Pipeline Safety

Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission
Attention: Pipeline Safety Program
PO Box 47250, Olympia, WA 98504-7250
Phone 360-664-1150 Fax 360-586-1172
www.utc.wa.gov/ccops